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DOCUMENTS

[Under this head it is proposed to print in each issue a few documents of historical importance, hitherto unprinted. It is intended that the documents shall be printed with verbal and literal exactness, and that an exact statement be made of the present place of deposit of the document and, in the case of archives and libraries, of the volume and page or catalogue number by which the document is designated. Contributions of important documents, thus authenticated, will be welcomed.]

I. Draft of an Address of the Continental Congress to the People of the United States, 1776.

THIS Address to the Inhabitants of the United Colonies is one of the way-marks on the road to independence, although it has not till now had attention drawn to it. The movement that gave rise to its preparation was started by James Wilson, who shared with Dickinson the leadership of the conservative element in Pennsylvania and in Congress. On the 9th of January, 1776, — when *Common Sense* had just made its appearance, — Wilson proposed that Congress make some answer to the recently delivered speech of the King in which the rebellious colonists were charged with aiming at independence, (*Diary of Richard Smith*, January 9.) He doubtless thought that an address to the people, telling what Congress had done and what it had in contemplation, would tend to mould opinion, particularly in Pennsylvania, where the extremists were carrying things with a high hand, and that it would serve to inspire wavering minds with enthusiasm for the cause.

Wilson had a strong following in Congress, but, mainly through the exertions of the New England delegates, led by Samuel Adams, he failed to carry his point on that day. Two weeks later, however he was successful, and the predominance of the conservative element in Congress is shown by the election, on January 24, of Dickinson, Wilson, Hooper, Duane, and Alexander as the committee to draw up the Address. Richard Smith tells us (*Diary*, January 24) that debate on the motion to elect this committee lasted the entire day and that they were instructed to draft just such an address as is given below. “Much,” adds he, “was said about Independence and the Mode and Propriety of stating

our Dependence on the King." The committee made their report to Congress on February 13, and it is entirely in the handwriting of Wilson. The Journal of Congress states that it was then tabled; and it was never again brought forward for consideration. Its spirit, in spite of the not uncertain ring of the last paragraph, was too tame to meet with general approval.

That the majority in Congress was able to bring about the election of the conservative committee just mentioned, indicates the strength at that time of those opposed to a declaration of independence. Not less interesting is the fact that the aggressive minority, favoring independence, was able, after unsuccessfully opposing the election of the committee, to win over within three weeks sufficient votes to prevent the consideration and the adoption of the Address. While Congress was not yet ready to decide in favor of independence, it was, however, unwilling to adopt any measure that might stand in the way of so doing when the opportune time should arrive. To publish this Address just as the ports were about being opened to trade and when the equipment of privateers was soon to be authorized, would have been inconsistent in the extreme, and as it could serve no good purpose, it was suppressed.

Wilson believed, with many others, that, having no instructions to favor independence, he had to do his best to steer a middle course. The importance attached to instructions is exemplified in his address to the citizens of Pennsylvania, published in the *Pennsylvania Packet* of October 17, 1780. He maintains that he was not an enemy to independence, but that he "early foresaw it could not but be the ultimate end. When the measure began to be an object of contemplation in Congress, the Delegates of Pennsylvania were expressly restricted from consenting to it; my uniform language in Congress was that I never would vote for it contrary to my instructions: I went farther, and declared, that I never would vote for it without your authority; and was I to be blamed? Should this act have been the act of four or five individuals? Or should it have been yours? It would have been the highest presumption in your Delegates to have taken a step of such immense importance without your sanction." He adds that, when the conference of committees on June 24 changed the instructions received from the Assembly, he spoke and voted for independence, and he rightfully states that his voice was necessary to carry the vote of Pennsylvania in favor of independence.

The importance of the steps in the preparation of this Address lies chiefly in showing how the more radical spirits in Congress by

sheer aggressiveness beat down their opponents and won converts to their views.

HERBERT FRIEDENWALD.

[Reports of Committees on Increasing Powers of Congress, Recommendations, Fasts, &c N^o 24. pp. 219-232, 217.]

To the Inhabitants of the Colonies of New Hampshire, Massachusetts Bay, Rhode Island and Providence Plantations, Connecticut, New York, New Jersey, Pennsylvania, the Counties of New Castle Kent and Sussex on Delaware, Maryland, Virginia, North Carolina, South Carolina and Georgia, from their Delegates in Congress

Friends and Countrymen

History, we believe, cannot furnish an Example of a Trust, higher and more important than that, which we have received from your Hands. It comprehends in it every Thing that can rouse the Attention and interest the Passion of a People, who will not reflect Disgrace upon their Ancestors, nor degrade themselves, nor transmit Infamy to their Descendants. It is committed to us at a Time when every Thing dear and valuable to *such* a People is in imminent Danger. This Danger arises from those, whom we have been accustomed to consider as our Friends; who really were so, while they continued friendly to themselves; and who will again be so, whenever they shall return to a just sense of their own Interests. The Calamities, which threaten us, would be attended with the total Loss of those Constitutions, formed upon the venerable Model of British Liberty, which have been long our Pride and Felicity. To avert those *Calamities* we are under the disagreeable Necessity of making temporary Deviations from those *Constitutions*.

Such is the Trust reposed in us. Much does it import you and us, that it be executed with Skill and with Fidelity. That we have discharged it with Fidelity, we enjoy the Testimony of a good Conscience. How far we have discharged it with Skill must be determined by you, who are our Principals and Judges, to whom we esteem it our Duty to render an Account of our Conduct. To enable you to judge of it, as we would wish you to do, it is necessary that you should be made acquainted with the *Situation*, in which your Affairs have been placed; the *Principles*, on which we have acted; and the *Ends*, which we have kept and still keep in View.

That all Power was originally in the People — that all the Powers of Government are derived from them — that all Power, which they have not disposed of, still continues theirs — are Maxims of the *English* Constitution, which, we presume, will not be disputed. The Share of Power, which the King derives from the People, or, in other Words, the Prerogative of the Crown, is well known and precisely ascertained: It is the same in *Great*

Britain and in the Colonies. The Share of Power, which the House of Commons derives from the People, is likewise well known. The Manner in which it is conveyed is by Election. But the House of Commons is not elected by the Colonists; and, therefore, from *them* that Body can derive no Authority.

Besides; the Powers, which the House of Commons receives from its Constituents, are entrusted by the Colonies to their Assemblies in the several Provinces. Those Assemblies have Authority to propose and assent to Laws for the Government of their Electors, in the same Manner as the House of Commons has Authority to propose and assent to Laws for the Government of the Inhabitants of *Great Britain*. Now the same collective Body cannot delegate the same Powers to distinct representative Bodies. The undeniable Result is, that the *House of Commons* neither has nor can have any Power derived from the *Inhabitants of these Colonies*.

In the Instance of imposing *Taxes*, this Doctrine is clear and familiar: It is true and just in every *other* Instance. If it would be incongruous and absurd, that the same Property should be liable to be taxed by two Bodies independent of each other; would less Incongruity and Absurdity ensue, if the same Offence were to be subjected to different and perhaps inconsistent Punishments? Suppose the Punishment directed by the Laws of one Body to be Death, and that directed by those of the other Body to be Banishment for Life; how could both Punishments be inflicted?

Though the Crown possesses the same Prerogative over the Colonies, which it possesses over the Inhabitants of *Great Britain*: Though the Colonists delegate to their Assemblies the same Powers, which our Fellow-Subjects in *Britain* delegate to the House of Commons: Yet by some inexplicable Mystery in Politics, which is the Foundation of the odious System that we have so much Reason to deplore, *additional* Powers over you are ascribed to the Crown, as a Branch of the British Legislature: And the House of Commons — *a Body which acts Solely by derivative Authority* — is supposed entitled to exert over you an Authority, which *you* cannot *give*, and which *it* cannot *receive*.

The Sentence of universal Slavery gone forth against you is; *that the British Parliament have Power to Make Laws, WITHOUT YOUR CONSENT, binding you in ALL Cases whatever*. Your Fortunes — your Liberties — your Reputations — your Lives — every Thing that can render you and your Posterity happy — all are the Objects of the Laws: All must be enjoyed, impaired or destroyed as the Laws direct. And are you the Wretches, who have Nothing that you *can* or *ought* to call *your own*? Were all the rich Blessings of Nature — all the Bounties of indulgent Providence — poured upon you, not for your own Use; but for the Use of those, upon whom neither Nature nor Providence hath bestowed Qualities or Advantages superior to yours?

From this Root of Bitterness numerous are the Branches of Oppression that have sprung. Your most undoubted and highest-priz'd Rights have been invaded. Heavy and unnecessary Burthens have been imposed on

you: Your Interests have been neglected, and sometimes wantonly sacrificed to the Interests, and even to the Caprice of others. When you felt — for your Enemies have not yet made any Laws to divest you of feeling — Uneasiness under your Greivances, and expressed it in the natural Tone of Complaint; your Murmurs were considered and treated as the Language of Faction, and your Uneasiness was ascribed to a restive Disposition, impatient of Controul.

In Proportion, however, as your Oppressions were multiplied and increased, your Opposition to them became firm and vigourous. Remonstrances succeeded Petitions: A Resolution, carried into Effect, not to import Goods from *Great Britain* succeeded both. The Acts of Parliament then complained of were, in Part, repealed. Your Good-Humour and unsuspecting Fondness returned. Short — alas! too short — was the Season allowed for indulging them. The former System of Rigour was renewed.

The Colonies, wearied with presenting fruitless Supplications and Petitions *separately*; or prevented, by arbitrary and abrupt Dissolutions of their Assemblies, from using even those fruitless Expedients for Redress, determined to *join* their Counsels and their Efforts. Many of the Injuries flowing from the unconstitutional and ill-advised Acts of the British Legislature affected all the Provinces equally; and even in those Cases, in which the Injuries were confined, by the Acts, to one or to a few, the *Principles*, on which they were made extended to all. If common Rights, common Interests, common Dangers and common Sufferings are Principles of Union, what could be more natural than the Union of the Colonies?

Delegates, authorised by the several Provinces from Nova Scotia to Georgia to represent them and act in their Behalf, met in GENERAL CONGRESS.

It has been objected, that this Measure was unknown to the Constitution; that the Congress was, of Consequence, an illegal Body; and that its Proceedings could not, in any Manner, be recognized by the Government of Britain. To those, who offer this Objection, and have attempted to vindicate, by its supposed Validity, the Neglect and Contempt, with which the Petition of that Congress to his Majesty was treated by the Ministry, we beg Leave, in our Turn, to propose, that they would explain the Principles of the Constitution, which warranted the *Assembly of the Barons at RUNNINGMEDE* when *MAGNA CHARTA* was signed, the *Convention-Parliament* that recalled Charles 2^d and the *Convention of Lords and Commons* that placed King William on the Throne. When they shall have done this we shall, perhaps, be able to apply their Principles to prove the necessity and Propriety of a Congress.

But the Objections of those, who have done so much and aimed so much against the Liberties of America, are not confined to the *Meeting* and the *Authority* of the Congress: They are urged with equal Warmth against the *Views* and *Inclinations* of those who composed it. We are told, in the Name of Majesty itself, that “the Authors and Promoters of

this *desperate Conspiracy*," as those who framed his Majesty's Speech are pleased to term our *laudable Resistance*, "have, in the Conduct of it, derived great Advantage from the Difference of his Majesty's Intentions and theirs. That they meant only to amuse by vague Expressions of Attachment to the Parent State, and the strongest Protestations of Loyalty to the King, whilst they were preparing for a general Revolt. That, on the Part of his Majesty and the Parliament, the Wish was rather to reclaim than to subdue." It affords us some Pleasure to find that the Protestations of Loyalty to his Majesty, which have been made, are allowed to be strong ; and that Attachment to the Parent State is owned to be expressed. Those Protestations of Loyalty and Expressions of Attachment ought, by every Rule of Candour, to be presumed sincere, unless Proofs evincing their Insincerity can be drawn from the Conduct of those who used them.

In examining the Conduct of those, who directed the Affairs of the Colonies at the Time when, it is said, they were preparing for a general Revolt, we find it an easy Undertaking to shew, that they merited no Reproach from the British Ministry by Making any Preparations *for that Purpose*. We wish it were as easy to shew, that they merited no Reproach from their Constituents, by neglecting the necessary Provisions *for their Security*. Has a single Preparation been made, which has not been found requisite for our Defence? Have we not been attacked in Places where, fatal Experience taught us, we were not sufficiently prepared for a successful Opposition? On which Side of this unnatural Controversy was the *ominous Intimation* first given, that it must be decided by Force? Were Arms and Ammunition imported into *America*, before the Importation of them was prohibited? What Reason can be assigned for this Prohibition, unless it be this: that those who made it had determined upon such a System of Oppression as they knew, would *force* the Colonies into Resistance? And yet, they "wished only to reclaim!"

The Sentiments of the Colonies, expressed in the Proceedings of their Delegates assembled in 1774 were far from being disloyal or disrespectful. Was it disloyal to offer a Petition to your Sovereign? Did your still and anxious Impatience for an Answer, which your *Hopes*, founded only on your *Wishes*, as you too soon experienced, flattered you would be a gracious one—did this Impatience indicate a Disposition only to amuse? Did the keen Anguish, with which the Fate of the Petition filled your Breasts, betray an Inclination to avail your selves of the Indignity, with which you were treated, for forwarding favourite Designs of Revolt?

Was the Agreement not to import Merchandise from *Great Britain* or *Ireland*; nor, after the tenth Day of September last, to export our Produce to those Kingdoms and the *West-Indies*—was this a disrespectful or an hostile Measure? Surely we have a Right to withdraw or to Continue our own Commerce. Though the British Parliament have exercised a Power of *directing* and *restraining* our Trade; yet, among all their extraordinary Pretensions, we recollect no Instance of their attempting to *force* it contrary to our Inclinations. It was well known, before this Measure was

adopted, that it would be detrimental to our own Interest, as well as to that of our fellow-Subjects. We deplored it on both Accounts: We deplored the Necessity that produced it. But we were willing to sacrifice our Interest to any probable Method of regaining the Enjoyment of those Rights, which, by violence and Injustice, had been infringed.

Yet even this peaceful Expedient, which Faction surely never suggested, has been represented, and by high Authority too, as a seditious and unwarrantable Combination. We are, we presume, the first Rebels and Conspirators, who commenced their Conspiracy and Rebellion with a System of Conduct, immediately and directly frustrating every Aim, which Ambition or Rapaciousness could propose. Those, whose Fortunes are desperate, may upon slighter Evidence be charged with desperate Designs: But how improbable is it, that the Colonists, who have been happy, and have known their Happiness in the quiet Possession of their Liberties; who see no Situation more to be desired, than that, in which, till lately, they have been placed; and whose warmest Wish is to be re-instated in the Enjoyment of that Freedom, which they claim and are entitled to as Men and as British Subjects—how improbable is it that *such* would, without any Motives that could tempt even the most *profligate* Minds to Crimes, plunge themselves headlong into all the Guilt and Danger and Distress, with which those that endeavour to overturn the Constitution of their Country are always surrounded, and frequently overwhelmed?

The humble unambitious Colonists asked only for “Peace, Liberty and Safety.” This, we think, was a reasonable Request: Reasonable as it was, it has been refused. Our ministerial Foes, dreading the Effects, which our commercial Opposition might have upon their favourite Plan of reducing the Colonies to Slavery, were determined not to hazard it upon that Issue. They employed military Force to carry it into Execution. Opposition of Force by Force, or Unlimited Subjection was now our only Alternative. Which of them did it become Freemen, determined never to surrender that Character, to chuse? The Choice was worthily made. We wish for Peace—we wish for Safety: But we will not, to obtain either or both of them, part with our Liberty. The sacred Gift descended to us from our Ancestors: We cannot dispose of it: We are bound by the strongest Ties to transmit it, as we have received it, pure and inviolate to our Posterity.

We have taken up Arms in the best of Causes. We have adhered to the virtuous Principles of our Ancestors, who expressly stipulated, in their Favour, *and in ours*, a Right to resist every attempt upon their Liberties. We have complied with our Engagements to our Sovereign. He should be the *Ruler* of a *free* People: We will not, as far as his Character depends upon us, permit him to be degraded into a *Tyrant* over *Slaves*.

Our *Troops* are Animated with the Love of Freedom. They have fought and bled and conquered in the Discharge of their Duty as good Citizens as well as brave Soldiers. Regardless of the Inclemency of the Seasons, and of the Length and Fatigue of the March, they go, with Cheerfulness, wherever the Cause of Liberty and their Country requires

their Service. We confess that they have not the Advantages arising from Experience and Discipline : But Facts have shewn, that native Courage, warmed with Patriotism, is sufficient to counterbalance those Advantages. The Experience and Discipline of our Troops will daily encrease : Their Patriotism will receive no Diminution : The longer those, who have forced us into this War, oblige us to continue it, the more formidable we shall become.

The Strength and Resources of *America* are not confined to Operations *by Land*. She can exert herself likewise *by Sea*. Her Sailors are hardy and brave : She has all the Materials for Ship-building : Her Artificers can work them into Form. We pretend not to vie with the Royal Navy of England ; though that Navy *had its Beginnings* : But still we may be able in a great Measure to defend our own Coasts ; and may intercept, as we have been hitherto successful in doing, Transports and Vessels laden with Stores and Provisions.

Possessed of so many Advantages ; favoured with the Prospect of so many more : Threatened with the Destruction of our Constitutional Rights ; cruelly and illiberally attacked, because we will not subscribe to our own Slavery ; ought we to be animated with Vigour ; or to sink into Despondency ? When the Forms of our Government are, by those entrusted with the Direction of them, perverted from their original Design ; ought we to submit to this Perversion ? Ought we to sacrifice the *Forms*, when the Sacrifice becomes necessary for preserving the *Spirit* of our Constitution ? — Or ought we to neglect, and, neglecting, to lose the Spirit by a superstitious Veneration for the Forms ? We regard those Forms, and wish to preserve them as long as we can consistently with higher Objects : But much more do we regard essential Liberty, which, at all Events, we are determined not to lose, but with our Lives. In contending for this Liberty, we are willing to go through good Report, and through evil Report.

In our present situation, in which we are called to oppose an Attack upon your Liberties, made under bold Pretensions of Authority from that Power, to which the executive Part of Government is, in the ordinary Course of Affairs, committed — in this Situation, every Mode of Resistance, though directed by Necessity and by Prudence, and authorised by the Spirit of the Constitution, will be exposed to plausible Objections drawn from its Forms. Concerning such Objections, and the Weight that may be allowed to them, we are little solicitous. It will not discourage us to find ourselves represented as “labouring to enflame the Minds of the People in America, and openly avowing Revolt Hostility and Rebellion.” We deem it an Honour to “have raised Troops, and collected a Naval Force” ; and, “*cloathed with the sacred Authority of the People, from whom all LEGITIMATE AUTHORITY proceeds*, to have exercised legislative, executive and judicial Powers.” For what Purposes were those Powers instituted ? For your Safety and Happiness. You and the World will judge whether those Purposes have been best promoted by us ; or by those who claim the Powers, which they charge us with assuming.

But while we feel no Mortification at being misrepresented with Regard to the *Measures* employed by us for accomplishing the great Ends, which you have appointed us to pursue ; we cannot sit easy under an Accusation, which charges us with laying aside those *Ends*, and endeavouring to accomplish *such as are very different*. We are accused of carrying on the War “for the Purpose of establishing an independent Empire.”

We disavow the Intention — We declare, that what we aim at, and what we are entrusted by you to pursue, is *the Defence and the Re-establishment of the constitutional Rights of the Colonies*. Whoever gives impartial Attention to the Facts we have already stated, and to the Observations we have already made, must be fully convinced that all the Steps, which have been taken by us in this unfortunate Struggle, can be accounted for as rationally and as satisfactorily by supposing, that the Defence and Re-establishment of their Rights were the Objects which the Colonists and their Representatives had in View ; as by supposing that an independent Empire was their Aim. Nay, we may safely go farther and affirm, without the most distant Apprehension of being refuted, that many of those Steps can be accounted for rationally and satisfactorily only upon the former Supposition ; and cannot be accounted for, in that Manner, upon the latter. The numerous Expedients that were tried, though fruitlessly, for avoiding Hostilities : The visible and unfeigned Reluctance and Horror, with which we entered into them : The Caution and Reserve, with which we have carried them on : The attempts we have made by petitioning the Throne, and by every other Method, which might probably, or could possibly be of any Avail for procuring an Accommodation — These are not surely the usual Characteristics of Ambition.

In what Instance have we been the Aggressors ? Did our Troops take the Field before the ministerial Forces began their hostile March to *Lexington* and Concord ? Did we take Possession, or did we form any Plan for taking Possession of *Canada*, before we knew that it was a Part of the ministerial System to pour the *Canadians* upon our Frontiers ? Did we approach the *Canadians*, or have we treated them as Enemies ? Did we take the Management of the *Indian* Tribes into our Hands, before we were well assured that the Emissaries of Administration were busy in persuading them to strike us ? When we treated with them, did we imitate the barbarous Example ? Were not our Views and Persuasions confined to keeping them in a State of Neutrality ? Did we seize any Vessel of our Enemies, before our Enemies had seized some of ours ? Have we yet seized any, except such as were employed in the Service of Administration, and in supplying those that were in actual Hostilities against us ? Cannot our whole Conduct be reconciled to *Principles and Views of Self-Defence* ? Whence then the uncandid Imputation of *aiming at an independent Empire* ?

Is no Regard to be had to the Professions and Protestations made by us, on so many different Occasions, of Attachment to Great Britain, of Allegiance to his Majesty ; and of Submission to his government upon the

Terms, on which the Constitution points it out as a Duty, and on which alone a *British Sovereign* has a Right to demand it?

When the Hostilities commenced by the ministerial Forces in Massachusetts Bay, and the imminent Dangers threatening the other Colonies rendered it absolutely necessary that they should be put into a State of Defence—even on that Occasion, we did not forget our Duty to his Majesty, and our regard for our fellow-Subjects in Britain. Our Words are these: “But as we most ardently wish for a Restoration of the Harmony formerly subsisting between our Mother-Country and these Colonies, the Interruption of which must, at all Events, be exceedingly injurious to both Countries: [Resolved] that with a sincere Design of contributing, by all Means in our Power not incompatible with a just Regard for the undoubted Rights and true Interests of these Colonies, to the Promotion of this most desirable Reconciliation, an humble and dutiful Address be presented to his Majesty.”

If Purposes of establishing an independent Empire had lurked in our Breasts, no fitter Occasion could have been found for giving Intimations of them, than in our Declaration setting forth the Causes and Necessity of our taking up Arms: Yet even there no Pretence can be found for fixing such an Imputation on us. “Lest this Declaration should disquiet the Minds of our Friends and fellow-Subjects in any Part of the Empire, we assure them, that we mean not to dissolve that Union, which has so long and so happily subsisted between us, and which we sincerely wish to see restored. Necessity has not yet driven us into that desperate Measure, or induced us to excite any other Nation to war against them. We have not raised Armies with the ambitious Designs of Separating from Great Britain, and establishing independent States.” Our Petition to the King has the following asseveration. “By such Arrangements as your Majesty’s Wisdom can form for collecting the united Sense of your American People, we are convinced your Majesty would receive such satisfactory Proofs of the Disposition of the Colonists towards their Sovereign and the Parent State, that the wished for Opportunity would be soon restored to them, of evincing the Sincerity of their Professions by every Testimony of Devotion becoming the most dutiful Subjects and the most affectionate Colonists.” In our Address to the Inhabitants of Great Britain, we say: “We are accused of aiming at Independence: But how is this Accusation supported? By the Allegations of your Ministers, not by our Actions. Give us Leave most solemnly to assure you, that we have not yet lost Sight of the Object we have ever had in View, a Reconciliation with you on constitutional Principles, and a Restoration of that friendly Intercourse, which to the Advantage of both we till lately maintained.”

If we wished to detach you from your Allegiance to his Majesty, and to wean your Affections from a Connexion with your fellow-Subjects in Great Britain, is it likely that we would take so much Pains upon every proper Occasion, to place those Objects before you in the most agreeable Points of View?

If any equitable Terms of Accommodation had been offered to us, and we had rejected them, there would have been some Foundation for the Charge that we endeavoured to establish an independent Empire. But no Means have been used either by Parliament or by Administration for the Purpose of bringing this Contest to a Conclusion, besides Penalties directed by Statutes, or Devastations occasioned by War. Alas ! how long will Britons forget that Kindred-Blood flows in your Veins ? How long will they strive, with hostile Fury, to sluice it out from Bosoms that have already bled in their Cause ; and, in their Cause, would still be willing to pour out what remains, to the last precious Drop ?

We are far from being insensible of the Advantages, which have resulted to the Colonies as well as to Britain from the Connexion which has hitherto subsisted between them : We are far from denying them, or wishing to lessen the Ideas of their Importance. But the Nature of the Connexion, and the Principles, on which it was originally formed, and on which alone it can be maintained, seem unhappily to have been misunderstood or disregarded by those, who laid and conducted the late destructive Plan of Colony-Administration. It is a Connexion founded upon mutual Benefits ; upon Religion, Laws, Manners, Customs and Habits common to both Countries. Arbitrary Exertions of Power on the Part of Britain, and servile Submission on the [torn] Colonies, if the Colonies should ever become degenerate enough to [torn] it, would immediately rend every generous Bond asunder. An intimate Connexion between Freemen and Slaves cannot be continued without Danger and, at last, Destruction to the former. Should your Enemies be able to reduce you to Slavery, the baneful Contagion would spread over the whole Empire. We verily believe that the Freedom, Happiness and Glory of Great Britain, and the Prosperity of his Majesty and his Family depend upon the Success of your Resistance. You are now expending your Blood, and your Treasure in promoting the Welfare and true Interests of your Sovereign and your fellow-Subjects in Britain, in Opposition to the most dangerous Attacks that have been ever made against them.

The Ideas of deriving Emolument to the Mother Country by taxing you, and depriving you of your Constitutions and Liberties were not introduced till lately. The Experiments, to which those Ideas have given Birth, have proved disastrous : The Voice of Wisdom calls loudly that they should be laid aside. Let them not, however, be removed from View. They may serve as Beacons to prevent future Shipwrecks.

Britain and these Colonies have been Blessings to each other. Sure we are, that they might continue to be so. Some salutary System might certainly be devised, which would remove, from both Sides, Jealousies that are ill-founded, and the Causes of Jealousies that are well founded ; which would restore to both Countries those important Benefits that Nature seems to have intended them reciprocally to confer and to receive ; and which would secure the Continuance and the Encrease of those Benefits to numerous succeeding Generations. That such a System may be formed is our ardent Wish.

But as such a System must affect the Interest of the Colonies as much as that of the Mother Country, why should the Colonies be excluded from a Voice in it? Should not, to say the least upon this Subject, their Consent be asked and obtained as to the *general Ends* which it ought to be calculated to answer? Why should not its Validity depend upon us as well as upon the Inhabitants of Great Britain? No Disadvantage will result to them: An important Advantage will result to [us]. We shall be affected by no Laws, the Authority of which, as far as they regard us, is not *founded on our own Consent*. This Consent may be expressed as well by a Solemn Compact, as if the Colonists, by their Representatives, had an immediate Voice in passing the Laws. In a Compact we would *concede* liberally to Parliament: For the *Bounds* of our Concessions would be known.

We are too much attached to the English Laws and Constitution and know too well their happy Tendency to diffuse Freedom, Prosperity and Peace wherever they prevail, to desire an independent Empire. If one Part of the Constitution be pulled down, it is impossible to foretel whether the other Parts of it may not be shaken, and, perhaps, overthrown. It is a Part of our Constitution to be under Allegiance to the Crown. Limited and ascertained as the Prerogative is, the Position — *that the King can do no wrong* — may be founded in *Fact* as well as in *Law*, if you are not wanting to yourselves.

We trace your Calamities to the House of Commons. *They* have undertaken to *give* and *grant your* Money. From a supposed virtual Representation in *their* House it is argued, that *you* ought to be bound by the Acts of the British Parliament in all Cases whatever. This is no Part of the Constitution. This is the Doctrine, to which we will never subscribe our Assent: This is the Claim, to which we adjure you, as you tender your own Freedom and Happiness, and the Freedom and Happiness of your Posterity, never to submit. The same Principles, which directed *your Ancestors* to oppose the exorbitant and dangerous Pretensions of the Crown, should direct *you* to oppose the no less exorbitant and dangerous Claims of the House of Commons. Let all Communication of despotic Power through that Channel be cut off, and your Liberties will be safe.

Let neither our Enemies nor our Friends make improper Inferences from the Solicitude, which we have discovered to remove the Imputation of aiming to establish an independent Empire. Though an independent Empire is not our *Wish*; it may — let your Oppressors attend — it may be the *Fate* of our Countrymen and ourselves. It is in the Power of your Enemies to render Independency or Slavery your and our only alternative. Should we — will you, in such an Event, hesitate a Moment about the Choice? Let those, who drive us to it, answer to their King and to their Country for the Consequences. We are *desirous* to continue Subjects: But we are *determined* to continue Freemen. We shall deem ourselves bound to renounce; and, we hope, you will follow our Example in renouncing the *former* Character whenever it shall become incompatible with the *latter*.

While we shall be continued by you in the very important Trust, which you have committed to us, we shall keep our Eyes constantly and steadily fixed upon the grand Object of the Union of the Colonies—THE RE-ESTABLISHMENT AND SECURITY OF THEIR CONSTITUTIONAL RIGHTS. Every Measure that we employ shall be directed to the Attainment of this great End: No Measure, necessary, in our Opinion, for attaining it, shall be declined. If any such Measure sh [torn] our principal Intention, draw the Colonies into Engagements that may suspend or dissolve their Union with their fellow-Subjects in Great Britain, we shall lament the Effect; but shall hold ourselves justified in adopting the Measure. That the Colonies may continue connected, as they have been, with Britain, is our second Wish: Our first is—THAT AMERICA MAY BE FREE.

2. *The Surrender of Fort Charlotte, Mobile, 1780.*

[The following documents are sent by William Beer, Esq., Librarian of the Howard Memorial Library, New Orleans.]

During a short visit to London in 1895, I found at the Record Office, under the heading *Colonial Records, America and West Indies*, a complete series of documents relative to the history of the British colony of West Florida. I made a few notes, among which the more interesting relate to the capture of Fort Charlotte, Mobile, by the Spanish under Don Bernardo de Galvez.

After describing the surrender of Fort Bute and Baton Rouge, Gayarré in the *History of Louisiana* states that "on the 5th February, 1780, Galvez sailed from the Balize with 2000 men, composed of regulars, of the militia of the colony, and of some companies of free blacks. In the Gulf he was overtaken by a storm which crippled some of his vessels. After some delay Galvez succeeded in landing his army on the eastern point of Mobile harbor, but in such confusion that had General Campbell, who was at Pensacola, marched immediately against them, he might have secured an easy victory. For this Galvez had made provision, but learning from his spies that the English showed no sign of sallying from Pensacola he decided to attack Fort Charlotte."

We learn from Von Eelking, *Die Deutschen Hilfstruppen im Nordamerikanischen Befreiungs-Kriege, 1776 bis 1783*, Hannover, 1863, that an effort was made by General Campbell to relieve the fort, but the movements of the relieving force were delayed by heavy rain-storms which flooded the country.

After the summons to surrender and the receipt of Captain